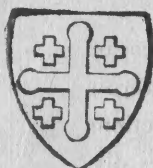


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The League of Nations Union.

President - VISCOUNT GREY OF FALLODON, K.G.

A British Organisation founded to promote the formation of a World League of Free Peoples for the securing of International Justice, Mutual Defence, and Permanent Peace.

22, BUCKINGHAM GATE, S.W. 1.

Time and Tide wait for No Man—Do it Now!

WHY NOT FORM THE LEAGUE NOW?

BY

MAJOR DAVID DAVIES, M.P.

SHOULD a League of Free Peoples come into existence during the war and before peace is declared? This is a question which many people are beginning to ask themselves. The answer is easy. If the Allies have not sufficient confidence in the principles upon which any effective League of Nations must be founded, to apply these principles amongst themselves; if the free nations cannot agree upon a practical scheme for the settlement of disputes arising between themselves, how can they expect the peoples of autocratic and military States to believe in their profession of world reconstruction? A non-committal policy of wait-and-see would be fatal. If we are in earnest in our desire to abolish war, to substitute reason for force, to establish the reign of public law, backed by adequate sanctions, why do we not set up the framework of the new world order now? By our own inactivity we lay ourselves open to the charge that this project is impracticable, that it is only an ideal that can never be realised. Is it not the duty of all the Allied peoples to prove that this charge is unfounded? In the supreme crisis of this life-and-death

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struggle, they should bind themselves by a solemn league and covenant to disestablish war and to overthrow militarism once and for all. The time has come for actions and not words. We are told that the secret treaties disclosed by the Russian revolutionaries are dead and buried, but I submit that the only real proof that this is so is to be found in the establishment among the Allies of a League of Free Nations forthwith. Is it likely that the German people will accept our professions and believe in our good faith when we talk about a League of Nations, unless we can bring such a League into existence at the earliest possible moment? We must demonstrate that the creation of a permanent edifice is possible amongst the twenty free peoples who are presumed to be fighting for the enthronement of right and for the freedom of small nations. It is high time that the architects prepared their drawings and the builders began their work.

After what has happened, that will be the only proof positive to the peoples in enemy countries that the Allies are really sincere and honest in their war aims. Germany provoked this war. By doing so she has created a potential League of Nations comprising all the free democracies of the world, who are fighting, not only for their existence, but to prevent a return of this catastrophe. Why cannot the League be formally established now, in these days of stress and storm? How will it be possible to set it up when peace comes and mutual jealousies again come into free play? We have seen how difficult it was to secure unity of command amongst the Allied armies. Unity of purpose, of aims and of policy is equally essential if we are to win the victory we desire. Difficulties should not deter us. National susceptibilities may be shocked. The pet schemes of our Chauvinists may have to be abandoned. But what do these things matter? Are they to count in

the balance when the destinies of the human race are at stake? All these arguments for delay will vanish if the Allies approach the problem on a basis of mutual confidence and goodwill. I believe that these difficulties can only be overcome if public opinion in all the Allied countries is sufficiently enlightened, if the issues are placed clearly before the peoples whose armies have bled and suffered. For these issues should be decided, not only by the politicians and diplomatists, but by those who have, in the fullest sense, borne the burden and heat of the day. It is for them to impose their democratic will, not only upon the enemy nations, but upon their own rulers as well.

May I endeavour to summarise the reasons for the establishment of a League of Free Nations now?

Firstly, as a proof to neutral and enemy peoples that the Allies are sincere and honest in the profession of their war aims, as enumerated by President Wilson and endorsed by other Allied statesmen.

Secondly, because public opinion in all Allied countries is ripe for practical measures, which will be more readily achieved whilst our peoples are bound together in a single alliance against a common foe than when the alliance has been dissolved—its primary work having been accomplished.

Thirdly, because whatever may be the military results of the war, **the League of Free Peoples will always exist as a permanent institution.** It will stand as the bulwark of democracy and freedom. It will continue the economic struggle until militarism and imperialism are finally vanquished in every quarter of the globe.

Fourthly, because a League of Free Nations is the next stage in the natural process of political evolution. Its further development will be by stages.

Fifthly, because, the League of Free Nations having been

established, the peoples of the Central Powers must consent or be compelled to join; the German people must be forced to forswear militarism, and they must be treated as outlaws until they have given guarantees of their willingness to join on terms of equality the other nations of the world in submitting all disputes to a Supreme Court of Law, in carrying out complete disarmament, and in establishing an International Police Force as the instrument of the World League of Peace for executing its decisions.

Sixthly, because this policy alone makes it possible to obtain guarantees from the enemy peoples that will give us security for the future against premeditated attacks.

Seventhly, because this positive programme is the only one which can maintain the morale of our peoples and of our Armies to endure to the end, until militarism is finally vanquished.

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